

**2018-2019
 Report 1**

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permission to publish contact details** <i>See end note for * and **</i>	<i>optional; only if you allow students preparing for study abroad to contact you (directly)</i>
	my e-mail address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: brambenthem30@gmail.com
faculty/college	Utrecht University, Faculty of Humanities, Departement of History and Art History
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Research Master Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies

destination city & country	Manchester, United Kingdom
name university abroad	University of Manchester
start date	17 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	27 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	I have had virtually no problems at all with the application process for my exchange. Communication with the University of Manchester was always very quick and clear, and help was always offered and given when needed. I always knew what I had to do.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	My experiences with the counselling and support at Utrecht University have been very positive. I always received quick and helpful responses to my e-mails and I always had the feeling that the international officers at Utrecht University were able, willing, and ready to help me. They ensured that I had nothing to worry about so that I could start my exchange without worry and stress.
academic preparation	I had to do little academic preparation content-wise. As far as my courses were concerned, I had one 'special' course called a Directed Reading, for which I together with a fellow student and a teacher set up our own course, which was probably the academic highlight of my period abroad. This Directed Reading was not guaranteed, so as a back-up plan I intended to study Greek instead, but fortunately there was a teacher available and willing do to this directed reading. As far as logistics are concerned, for some reason the digital learning environment of the University of Manchester did not let me register for my courses, but after I mailed my postgraduate coordinator, he manually enrolled me into the courses so that I would not experience any inconvenience, for which I am very thankful.
language preparation	I was lucky to go a country where I already spoke the main language - English. Other than taking the mandatory language assessment from Erasmus, I did not do any specific preparation since I achieved the highest result possible and I trusted that my previous knowledge and experience of English, especially after the first year of my English-language master, would be sufficient for my mobility.
finances	

I have had the fortune and privilege to receive enough financial support to make a very broad budget to ensure that I would be able to cover my expenses. I sat down with my parents to make the budget as is requested for applying for the exchange period, so that I knew which expenses would be waiting for me and to critically think about what I did or did not need and why.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I am very happy with the way the study programme is set up. The study programme, in my view, offers a broad range of possible subjects in my field of study, studied from different perspectives and with different methodologies. As far as organizational issues are concerned, I only experienced some difficulty with enrolling for the courses, which was thankfully solved by my postgraduate coordinator. I also have to thank the coordinator of the master's programme who put me into contact with a student and teacher who were already scheduled to do a Directed Reading together, which I was then able to join. This allowed to me further pursue my research interests and specialization, but it would also have been fine if had not gone through, because it always made clear to me that I would be assisted in finding another course in case the Directed Reading would not have gone through.

academic quality of education activities

In general, I have found the academic quality of the education activities to be very high. I did notice a difference in level with my own master's programme, which is probably because of the fact that my master's programme consists of two years, while the master's programme which I followed in Manchester consists of one year. I have not seen this as too much of a problem, as two of the courses that I took (on literary theory and Greek epigraphy) were about subjects that I had not studied before. While the course on Augustan Rome might not have been academically as challenging, it was high-quality course in my opinion, and it allowed me to study parts of the Augustan period which I had not yet considered. The Directed Reading, to finish, was the academic highlight of my stay abroad. Being able to explore topics on our own with another highly motivated student and a very enthusiastic, supportive, and encourage teacher was a real and tangible addition to my academic career. Another important education activity were the weekly research seminar lectures, where the whole departement would come together to listen to a specially invited scholar. These lectures have been, overall, very inspiring and were an interesting addition to my stay abroad.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I consider myself lucky to not have needed much counselling and support at my receiving university. As mentioned, I only had some issues at the beginning of my mobility when I could not enrol in my courses and when it was uncertain if I could take the Directed Reading that I wanted to take. Both issues, when I made them known to the relevant people, were solved quickly and adequately. I would like to stress that I always knew to whom I should go in the event of any problems or inconvenience. Both academic and support staff were very accessible and helpful.

transfer of credits

I knew beforehand that I would have to account for a different structure of the academic year. Whereas in Utrecht I would normally obtain 15 ECTS per period spread over three courses, in Manchester I would obtain 30 ECTS in one semester spread over four courses. One another thing that I had to account for was that Manchester does not from the beginning communicate in 'ECTS' but rather in Manchester credit; I was informed that this transfer or perhaps 'calculation' of credits would be straightforward: two Manchester credits equalled one ECTS, which meant that I had to obtain 60 Manchester credits to obtain the 30 ECTS that my study programme requires me to obtain.

STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
	The welcome and orientation programme was not very exciting or special, in my opinion. The different lectures that were given did provide me with all the information I needed, but it was usually information which I almost always had already received before. It was, however, a good opportunity to explore and experience the university for the first time. The specific welcome programme for my own study programme I found a bit disappointing: we were simply informed by the coordinator on a few practicalities and technicalities, but there was no room in the programme for actually getting to know your fellow students. It was also just then that I was informed of the 'Language Day', which would take place the day after but about which I had not heard anything. When I made this known, however, I received due apologies and was quickly and easily accommodated into this part of the the welcoming programme.
accommodation	
	When I tried to sign up for university accommodation, I was informed that I would be put on the bottom of the list because my mobility would last only one semester and that full-semester students would be given priority. I also reached out to student housing organizations, but they informed that in my city there were no options for a 'middle-stay': I would be here too long to be considered for a short-stay, while a long-stay would consist of 51 weeks. Therefore, I went to explore private roomshares and houseshares. When I started to put some effort into this, I received multiple responses and, if I recall correctly, just a week and a half after I had first sent out some messages I already signed the contract for my room. The house and room where I have stayed have been great, my housemate has been very kind and helpful: I have experienced no troubles at all during my stay.
leisure & culture	
	Because I arrived two weeks before classes actually started, I immediately went to explore possible leisure and culture activities. The university itself offered many such possibilities, with their great museum for example, or several lectures that are given throughout the semester. Furthermore, Manchester is a great city for museums anyway, because they are, one, all very good, and, two, all free! The city also offers many things to do for sports and music fans, because there are two very large football clubs and many, many concert halls. I have exclusively focused on Manchester itself during my stay abroad as far as leisure and culture are concerned, because I really wanted to become a part of the city and use my free-time to effect that. It would have been nice to see some more things outside Manchester, but I do not regret the way in which I have organized my time for leisure. I also wanted to make sure that I did not end up in the (in)famous 'international bubble' but really become a part of the university community, which I think I succeeded in by always attending the lunches and research seminars of department. Through these, I quickly became acquainted with both teachers and PhD students, talks and drinks with whom were always very interesting and nice.
suggestions/tips	
	Probably the most important tip that I have concerns accommodation, but the tip goes for all other aspects of your stay abroad: as soon as you think of it, start doing it. There is no such thing as starting 'too early'. I understand that you might want to 'just enjoy' your stay abroad, but believe me, there will be much more enjoying if you make sure that you have nothing to worry about. Furthermore, I think that trying to become an actual part of the city and university that you go to, not just of the other international students that are there as well, will make everybody's stay abroad much more fulfilling.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
	I definitely would recommend Manchester to others. The university is of a high quality, the library is amazing, and the people are very kind and helpful, which also goes for the city at large. Of course I cannot speak for

other departments, but my department has been very open and kind, and it was very easy to talk to and with everybody. The city is a nice, eclectic mix of different people, cultures, and architecture. It might not be the most spectacular city, but I think that that is actually a good thing - it allows to you become a part of the city without being completely overwhelmed by it.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Yes, but only for students that will do the same exchange I have done (so the Master's programme of Classics and Ancient History). Because of the fact that I did four elective courses, it meant that I had four essays due (with a total of 17000 words between them) over the course of two days. Of course I had loads of time to prepare, but it is still a very heavy, concentrated work load to be dealt with. I did not have do any language courses, which is assessed not by essays but by exams, or the Core Seminar, which runs the whole year and is meant for people who follow the whole master's programme. This is something I always knew and had in the back of mind, but of which I only very late realized the actual implications. If you have got room in your study program, consider following three instead of four courses; if you do not, then take a language course instead of a 'normal' course assessed by an essay; or communicate well in advance with the coordinator if you can receive an extension for one or more of the courses. This situation only occurred with exchange student, because the students from Manchester usually had two courses for which an essay was due, because they took both a language course and the Core Seminar, which is mandatory for them.

Report 2

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faculty/college	humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	ReMA Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (track ancient studies)

destination city & country	Manchester, UK
name university abroad	University of Manchester
start date	01 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 02 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	Because the agreement between the universities was solely based on my track in my MA and my department in Manchester, the application process was quite easy, personal and direct. This does mean that it was also quite informal, and several times there were miscummonucations and lost documents. Fortunately, the people that were dealing with my application were incredibly kind and helpful, so all in all it wasn't the worst application process I've ever been through.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	As always, the information on the website (once you find it) is quite sufficient for preparations, and my tutor helped a lot as well. The only slight problem I had was that it was not made very clear in what situations exactly a revised learning plan was needed, which is why mine was requested very late.
academic preparation	

Other than keeping my grades up, not much else was needed. the added workload of preparing for the exchange (especially finding accomodation) did put a small strain on it, however. I worked fulltime during the summer to ensure I had enough funds.
language preparation
I did the Erasmus tests, but because I went to an english-speaking country and had done that before not much else was needed. My master's at UU is in english as well, so I did not exactly need additional preparation. Other than that, I speak english at home with my siblings to practice.
finances
I save up a lot of my DUO for exactly these kind of opportunities, and had worked all summer, fulltime, for this exchange. Because it was within europe, those combined efforts made the costs easily bearable. My calculations beforehand proved to be quite acurate.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
the teachers were incredibly specialised and knowledgeable, and incredibly nice, but only having one contact hour per course per week kind of put a damper on that. besides that, during an entire semester, you only get a couple of formative assessments, with huge final essays that are your total grade. not ideal for me.
academic quality of education activities
great! as was mentioned above, the academic staff is amazing, and the department is small and sociable. weekly lunches and guest lectures for the MA students are a huge bonus.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I did not need much extra counseling, but it was always available when needed, and the coordinator makes sure to build up a personal relationship outside of appointments, so you never feel like you can't ask for help. when i contacted a teacher about some personal issues, i immediately received a lot of support from both the teacher and coordinator. the only thing that could be handled better is extensions on deadlines: those are incredibly final, and teachers can't change them, no matter the circumstance.
transfer of credits
has not happened as of yet. i e-mailed the coordinator first, who responded that he was on leave, and then e-mailed my supervisor, who merely forwarded my e-mail to someone else. Manchester has a rather tiresome process for grading and uploading grades.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
very elaborate, and both educational and fun. it is a university-wide party for a week, with helpful workshops and introductions in between. it was rather overwhelming, but very nice.
accommodation
there is no on-campus accomodation for exchange students who are there for less than a year, but with some effort private accomodation nearby can be found, and public transport and other transport opportunities are not horrible.
leisure & culture
Manchester is an amazing city, and one that doesn't bore quickly! I can especially recommend a small trip to the Lake district or Peak district, and downtown to the Manchester Art Gallery.

suggestions/tips

For Dutch students, renting a bike from the university's service, Biko Bikes, might be a good idea. It's only 1 pound per week, and while the bikes aren't great, it's an incredibly cheap way to get around. Manchester is also quite a good city to cycle: the cars are quite used to bicycles, and there's bike lanes downtown and on campus.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! It's incredibly large and modern, with an incredible academic staff and a lot to offer students. Besides, because it's only one country away it's not the most expensive exchange. It's a place one wouldn't quickly choose to travel to on vacation, but to live there is an incredible experience!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

What became a real problem for me was that the courses I was allowed to take by my sending university had a much higher workload than those same courses would have at home. This means that the content was what I needed, but the actual work I had to put in was much too much. This is not wholly reflected in my acquired study points as well. Make sure, beforehand, that this matches up..